

House Engrossed

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Forty-fifth Legislature
Second Regular Session
2002

HOUSE RESOLUTION 2007

A RESOLUTION

TO COMMEMORATE THE DEATH OF CHARLES P. THOMAS, FORMER PHOENIX CHIEF OF POLICE.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Former Phoenix Chief of Police, Charles P. "Charlie" Thomas died on
2 June 18, 2001 at the age of eighty-nine. A life-long Democrat, Charlie
3 Thomas was a remarkable man who led an extraordinary life. As Chief of
4 Police, his legacy of courage, integrity and vision shaped the Phoenix Police
5 Department.

6 In 1940, Charlie Thomas began a police career that would challenge and
7 empower law enforcement in Arizona through four decades. He rose through the
8 ranks - with time off to serve in World War II - and was a good cop in a
9 department that was trying to live down its reputation for rough-and-tumble
10 street corner justice and corruption.

11 Charlie Thomas was promoted to Chief of Police in 1952, skipping
12 several ranks. He took the job reluctantly at a time when the Chief's office
13 had a swinging door and men came, and went, every few months. It was a tough
14 job, but Charlie was up to it. Within weeks, he served notice that it
15 wouldn't be business as usual. He modeled himself on his former partner and
16 mentor, Lefty Mofford, the husband of former governor Rose Mofford, and for
17 the next eleven years, he blazed the trail to give Phoenix a tough, but fair,
18 professional, but compassionate, police department.

19 In 1953, when Phoenix was deeply segregated, Charlie Thomas stunned the
20 force and the city by issuing a directive that clearly and forcefully called
21 for improved minority relations. The directive stated, "In dealing with
22 minority groups, police officers should be governed by a respect for civil
23 rights...civil rights are nothing more or less than human rights". This was
24 a simple, strong statement that changed the way police did their jobs
25 forever. Charlie also backed up the policy with tough, no-nonsense training
26 and monitoring.

27 The list of Charlie Thomas' innovations goes on. Today, he would be
28 called an ordinary good cop. In 1952, he was an extraordinary agent for
29 change, professionalism and justice for all. In a demonstration of
30 compassion and audacity that we now know as visionary, he integrated the
31 department and appointed the first African-American sergeant. He put a black
32 officer on a beat in a white neighborhood, then stood beside him through the
33 public criticism and death threats made to both of them.

34 In 1956, he took the visionary step of moving women from "meter maids"
35 status and put seven regular, sworn female officers on walking beats in
36 downtown Phoenix.

37 Being a graduate of Northwestern University and a lifelong advocate of
38 continuing education, Charlie Thomas encouraged higher education for the
39 force and instituted the Police Academy. Charlie expected his officers and
40 patrolmen to be intellectually as well as physically fit.

41 Charlie Thomas helped to change Phoenix and he ended the corruption
42 that had plagued the Phoenix Police Department for years. After retiring as
43 police chief in 1963, he went on to serve as the chief deputy to the Maricopa
44 county sheriff, as a probation officer to the Maricopa county courts and as
45 a federal commissioner. But most importantly, he was the much loved and much

1 missed patriarch of his family. In fact, when asked what his most memorable
2 experience was during his days as police chief, Charlie replied, "Well, I
3 became a grandfather". Charlie Thomas was born in Phoenix, Arizona
4 Territory, in 1911. He graduated from Phoenix Union High School, where he
5 met his wife of fifty-seven years, Betty Turner. Betty died in 1987.
6 Charlie is survived by two daughters, Betty Bucey and Carol Thomas, seven
7 grandchildren, Steven Brotherton, Vicki Brotherton Lamphear, John Brotherton,
8 Bill Brotherton, Bob Brotherton, Kelly Bucey and Dana Clayton, and nine
9 great-grandchildren.

10 Therefore

11 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the State of Arizona:

12 That the Members of the House of Representatives commemorate the
13 anniversary of the passing of Charles P. "Charlie" Thomas and extend sincere
14 sympathies to his family and friends.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE MAY 8, 2002.

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE MAY 9, 2002.

UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE

May 8, 2002

Jake Flake
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Pro Tempore

Norman L. Moore
Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF STATE

H.R. 2007

This Resolution was received by the Secretary of State

This 9 day of May, 2002
at 8:25 o'clock A M.

Peter D. Bayless
Secretary of State